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10 EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

15 January 1968

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Bulgarian Reaction to Novotny's Departure

Bulgarian information media have exercised caution in reporting the recent Czech leadership changes. Following Dubcek's appointment the Bulgarian press published his biography and a very proper message from Bulgarian party leader Zhivkov. A television report led off with Zhivkov's message to Dubcek, but was immediately followed by another congratulatory message to the Brazilian Communist Party on the occasion of its Sixth Party Congress. The timing and presentation of the two messages seemed to equate the importance of both events. On 9 January another press article which dealt with the serious internal problems of the Czech party was killed after the first edition pointing up the delicate problem faced by the editors in presenting Novotny's demise.

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COMMENT: The separation of the top party/government posts cannot be a popular theme for Zhivkov who now stands alone as the only Eastern European leader who is both party first secretary and premier. Since Bulgaria's economy has been booming in recent years, Sofia will probably choose to blame Czechoslovakia's problems on its ailing economy.

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Political Changes in Prague may Warm CSSR-FRG Relations

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The new leadership in Prague seems interested in improving its relations with West Germany.

The Czechoslovaks have offered the West Germans the "fanciest" building in Prague, but they will probably turn it down in favor of a smaller, less expensive one. Prague originally offered the Israeli legation, but Bonn refused because it was too small and there were political objections. The West German officials assigned to the mission are scheduled to arrive in Prague the week of 22 January.

DIA review
completed.

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GRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION

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On 14 January Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Otto Klieka, thought to be a staunch anti-German, was named Czechoslovak Ambassador to Cairo. Klieka, an intelligent and capable diplomat, spent some five years in Nazi concentration camps, and later became known as an expert on Germany in the foreign ministry. Since he is a dedicated Communist and a Novotny man, he may be one of those hardline leaders opposing rapprochement with Bonn. Klieka's wife, Karla, is known to be outspokenly anti-German.

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Ulbricht Meets with Soviet Ambassador

The East German news agency ADN reported on 12 January that East German leader Walter Ulbricht and Soviet Ambassador to the GDR Petr Abrasimov met that day to discuss questions of mutual interest. The meeting, ADN reported, took place in a friendly atmosphere.

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COMMENT: Ulbricht also attended a Volkskammer meeting on the 12th.

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The East Germans are consulting with the Soviets, possibly about the situation in Prague and the 6 January Soviet memorandum on West Berlin.

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In connection with the latter, the East German Foreign Ministry issued a statement on 13 January denouncing Chancellor Kiesinger's plans to attend a CDU conference in Berlin on the 19th. The statement characterized the meeting as further evidence of the "intensification of the revanchist course of the Bonn government," and laid the responsibility for the consequences of such actions with its "instigators" in Bonn and West Berlin.

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Rumors About Impending Ouster of Polish Defense Minister Continue

The latest rumor concerns the replacement of Defense Minister Spychalski by Interior Minister Moczar. According to a Belgian military attache visiting Warsaw, Spychalski is in trouble because of his wife who is in Israel and a daughter now in Paris, neither of whom intend to return home. The stories cast Spychalski as being unable to command the loyalty of his family and thus unworthy of retaining the position of Defense Minister.

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COMMENT: Rumors, probably started by the ambitious Moczar clique, have been circulating Warsaw since the Near East crisis claiming that Mrs. Spychalski was in Israel and refused to return. However, both Spychalski and his wife have appeared together in Poland since that time, which tends to discount stories that there is a serious difference of opinion between them. The Spychalski's have two daughters and one may indeed be studying in Paris.

Latest Round of Canadian Claims Talks in Budapest Draws a Blank

The latest round of Hungarian-Canadian claims negotiations, held from 27 November to 13 December, ended abruptly when the Canadians broke off negotiations two days early when it became obvious that no progress was being made. Since the last round of talks, both parties' positions seem to have hardened. The Canadians held firm on their 7.5 million dollar claim, a fraction of the original claim of 24 million dollars. The Hungarians replied by withdrawing a \$6,000,000 offer made at the preceeding round. Karoly Reti, chief of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry's international claims department, presented a position based on Marxist polemics and displayed no real intention to compromise. The Canadians will attempt to reopen the question of claims with political leaders since they seem to have reached an impasse at the technical level.

Ireland Suspends Imports from East Germany

Ireland has temporarily suspended the importation of East German fertilizers containing animal matter in order to prevent the spread of hoof and mouth disease which is currently raging in England and traced to East German imports. The GDR has conducted an intensive year-long campaign to wipe-out hoof and mouth disease and prevent its spreading but apparently has been only moderately successful in checking it.

COMMENT: The UK has alluded to the GDR as a possible source of the current epidemic which has caused the destruction of countless cattle in England. While the GDR admits to having had a rash of the disease, it claims to have taken the proper precautions to prevent the spread to other countries. Travelers to East Germany reported the stringent measures to try to confine the disease, which apparently failed. Smarting from

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this bit of misfortune a Neues Deutschland editorial some weeks ago satirically commented that East Germany was responsible for hoof and mouth disease in England as well as for causing devaluation of the pound.

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